



ADVANCING FAITH, FAMILY AND FREEDOM

February 10, 2014

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General of the United States
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

The Honorable James B. Comey
Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigations
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Dear General Holder and Director Comey:

It is with great concern that I write regarding information currently being provided on the FBI's Hate Crimes website. I am the Executive Vice President of the Family Research Council (FRC) in Washington, D.C. Before coming to FRC, I served in the United States Army for thirty-six years, spending my last four years as the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence. With this background in international intelligence and homeland security, I believe providing accurate information to law enforcement is critical to our national security. Further, in this position it is my privilege to work with others who share my concerns.

Currently, the FBI Hate Crimes website lists the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as a source under its "Resources" section, alongside references to valid official documents and statutes.¹ Additionally, the "Hate Crime-Overview" page of the FBI Hate Crimes website discusses the SPLC as a partner in public outreach, an organization with which the FBI works to "establish rapport, share information, address concerns, and cooperate in solving problems."² The presentation of SPLC to the public as a trusted source of information on the serious matter of hate crimes is completely unacceptable.

The SPLC is a heavily politicized organization producing biased and inaccurate data on "hate groups" – *not hate crimes*. Moreover, the SPLC findings are not consistent with trends found in the FBI statistics. The FBI states that there has been a decrease in hate crimes of 24.3% from 1996 to 2010. During that period racial hate crimes decreased by 41.9%. However, the SPLC claims that since 2000, the number of hate *groups* has increased by 67.3%. Something is not right here.

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hate Crimes website, "In Depth," viewed February 3, 2014; http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/civilrights/hate_crimes

² Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hate Crimes website, "Overview," viewed February 3, 2014; http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/civilrights/hate_crimes/overview

Many organizations have been tagged with the “hate group” label because they are ardent defenders of marriage and sexuality as defined in the Hebrew and Christian Bible. We may disagree on how marriage should be defined, but there must be some recognition that reasonable people can approach this subject thoughtfully and passionately and come to different conclusions.

The SPLC has used its website to inflame public sentiment against those who disagree with some of the group’s goals, resulting in tragic consequences. On August 15, 2012, Floyd Lee Corkins II entered the FRC lobby armed with a loaded semi-automatic pistol and 100 rounds of ammunition, intending to slaughter as many FRC staff as he could because they oppose same-sex marriage. Fortunately, no deaths occurred because the building manager, Mr. Leo Johnson, heroically stopped Corkins despite being shot and wounded in the process.

On February 6, 2013, Corkins pleaded guilty to three charges in federal court, including committing an act of domestic terrorism while armed. Corkins is the only person to have been convicted under the D.C. terrorism statute enacted in 2002 – in the wake of 9/11. In a chilling interrogation video released by the FBI and played in court, Corkins said he picked his targets by relying on the SPLC website’s Hate Map. He also admitted to these facts in open court when he pleaded guilty. It is part of the indisputable public record.

Thus, the FBI now directs the public to trust a group whose website played a significant part in bringing about an act of domestic terrorism. These facts were developed by federal prosecutors – not FRC. We appreciate the work the FBI does every day, but we cannot allow the SPLC to be listed in official FBI resources as a friend of civil rights and law enforcement when the organization has become one of the biggest bullies in America.

Our concerns about SPLC blacklisting of organizations such as FRC, American Family Association, and Traditional Values Coalition simply because of their support for natural marriage are similar to the concerns over SPLC tactics expressed by academic experts. Laird Wilcox, one of America’s foremost scholars on political extremism, has said of the SPLC: “What they do is a kind of bullying and stalking.” He has provided an extended critique of the SPLC’s hate group data. Wilcox argues, based on his efforts to duplicate SPLC data, that it is utterly unreliable – if not fictional in large part.³

In conclusion, it is completely inappropriate for the Department of Justice to recommend public reliance on the SPLC hate group lists and data. The links to the SPLC as a FBI “Resource” must be taken down immediately, leaving only official, trustworthy sources listed on the agency’s webpage. Furthermore, we urge FBI leadership to end any current “partnership” with the SPLC in public outreach given the SPLC’s erroneous data and offensive mischaracterizations of groups such as FRC, AFA, and TVC.

³ Charlotte Allen, “King of Fearmongers,” *Weekly Standard* (April 15, 2013): 18-25, 23. Wilcox is similarly concerned about the pronouncements of the Anti-Defamation League.

Thank you for your consideration. Please send your reply to FRC, 801 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001 to share with my colleagues.

Respectfully,



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Executive Vice President
Family Research Council



David Barton
President
WallBuilders



L. Brent Bozell III
President
Media Research Center



Brian Brown
President
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